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NUTRITION PROGRAM NEWS

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Discussions and Evaluation at Nutrition Education Conference

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To supplement our report on the 1967 Nutrition Education Conference structure and speeches in the May-June issue of NUTRITION PROGRAM NEWS, we are covering small group discussions and participant evaluation of the Conference in this issue. The 1967 Conference was held in Washington, D.C., Feb. 20-22. It was sponsored by the Interagency Committee on Nutrition Education (ICNE) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Nutrition Programs Service unit of the Agricultural Research Service.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Each Conference participant was assigned to one of 12 discussion groups. In making the assignments, the Conference committee tried to preserve the interdisciplinary composition that was characteristic of the entire group. Each group had a leader and at least one resource person from the out-of-Washington participants. Group discussions focused on the following questions, which were presented to leaders and resource persons in advance:

1. What are some of the problem areas identified in this Conference for which solutions need to be found if effective nutrition education can take place?
2. What are some of the most effective means for bringing about improvement in nutrition practices?
3. What suggestions do you have for coordination of efforts in implementing nutrition education?

We are indebted to Mrs. Irene Wolgamot, Assistant to the Director, Consumer and Food Economics Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, for the analyses of the preconference and postconference questionnaires.

We hope this issue will be helpful to groups planning followup conferences.

From the lively discussions of the various groups, we are listing major problems, means of improving nutrition practices, and suggestions for coordination.

Major problems

Analysis of the group discussions reveals the participants' concern about the following areas:

1. Content or subject matter in nutrition.
 - A. Keeping nutritionists and other community workers up-to-date in the science of nutrition. Particular emphasis was placed on keeping workers with a limited background supplied with sound interpretations of nutrition research.
 - B. Keeping the layman from getting conflicting advice, misinformation, or confusing information from nutritionists and workers in allied professions.
2. Nutrition education in schools.
 - A. Initiating, developing, and evaluating sequential nutrition programs in elementary and secondary schools.
 - B. Using school lunch as a teaching tool.
 - C. Including nutrition in the undergraduate training of school teachers, particularly elementary school teachers.
3. Coordination.
 - A. Improving coordination of nutrition programs at Federal, State, and local levels.
 - B. Coordinating nutrition education with other areas, such as medical education.
4. Motivation. Developing techniques for inspiring various public groups to action.
5. Communication.
 - A. Learning more about principles and techniques of communication.
 - B. Identifying groups with which good communication should be maintained.

6. Research.
 - A. Exploring "whys" of food habits.
 - B. Evaluating communication via various media.
 - C. Studying audience understanding of nutrition.
 - D. Finding new ways to evaluate programs and materials.
7. Specific health problems.
 - A. Obesity.
 - B. Teenage nutrition problems.

Improving nutrition practices

There appeared to be some consensus that solutions to these problems could be worked out. The participants recommended:

1. Nutrition education be started in elementary schools and be continued through the formative years, taught by teachers with background in nutrition.
2. All possible communication techniques be used for reaching and working with people.
3. All community nutrition programs be coordinated.

Suggestions for coordination

Emphasis was placed on coordination of nutrition education by establishing and maintaining active nutrition committees. Two suggestions were made:

1. State leaders in Extension, welfare, school lunch, nutrition, hygiene, and education meet on a regular but informal basis to work out a coordinated nutrition program. The State group would focus on mutual problems, current work, and plans for future programs. New staff would sit in for orientation; outside speakers could be used as resource people. This type of coordination should be encouraged at the local levels as well.
2. Local schools set up their own nutrition education committees, with a representative on the community committee. Key personnel—school lunch managers, home economics teachers, dental hygienists, health teachers, parents, and principal—work on a coordinated nutrition education program.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

Participant evaluation of a Conference is always dependent upon what the participant expected at the start of the meetings. A preconference questionnaire was mailed to each participant to provide baselines for later evaluation.

Preconference questionnaires

From the 214 questionnaires mailed, 159 responses were received. It was clear from an analysis of the responses

that participants had given a great deal of thought to the program and were coming to the Conference with high expectations.

The topics listed far exceeded the number that could be covered in the available time. The participants suggested the following topics:

1. Background information in nutrition and related areas.
2. Planning and evaluating nutrition programs.
3. Coordination of nutrition programs.
4. Communication methods.
5. Motivation.
6. Education and training.
7. Research.
8. Reaching low-income people.

The questionnaires identified 30 different audiences to be reached with nutrition education. Those listed:

1. People in a community.
2. Consumers at all income levels.
3. Homemakers.
4. Young homemakers.
5. Working mothers.
6. Teenagers.
7. Older people.
8. Different age levels.
9. Low-income people, including welfare recipients.
10. Parents.
11. Groups speaking a foreign language.
12. Different cultural groups.
13. People on therapeutic diets.
14. Volunteer leaders.
15. Professional workers.
16. Caseworkers.
17. Doctors, nurses, and other health workers.
18. Industry.
19. Farmers.
20. Those in authority and in influential positions, particularly those who influence young people—school teachers, health educators, physical education directors, school nurses, Scout leaders, YWCA and YMCA youth leaders.
21. Workers in other agencies and groups interested in nutrition education.
22. Food editors, science writers, and medical writers.
23. Mass media personnel.
24. School administrators, junior high and elementary school teachers.
25. School lunch workers.
26. Future dietitians and home economics students.
27. Students in child development and family relations preparing to be social workers.
28. Researchers.
29. Rural people.
30. Preschool children.

Postconference questionnaires

Participants returned 79 postconference questionnaires. Replies to the question, "Did the conference meet your needs and expectations?" were nearly all favorable.

Many participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share ideas with representatives of different agencies and organizations. They said they gained much from talking with leaders in nutrition education. Others were complimentary of the way the Conference was planned and timed.

Some participants said they would have liked help on specific techniques or more direction toward specific needs and specific groups. Others felt that not enough time had been allowed for questions from the audience.

The presentations most often mentioned as highlights of the Conference were Dr. Ralph Patrick's "Social and Cultural Determinants of Food Habits" and Dr. James Bayton's "Problems of Communicating Nutrition," in that order. More than half of the participants cited the symposium on the basic concepts; Dr. Ruth Leverton discussed their development and Mrs. Joyce Myers and Miss Nazza Noble gave followup talks on the use of these concepts.

Dr. Hazel Stiebeling's luncheon talk, "How Far Have We Come?" was a highlight for many participants. Other mentioned Dr. George L. Mehren's opening "Welcome" and Dr. C. Glen King's presentation on the Food and Nutrition Board.

The three panels and the small group discussions were also named as highlights.

As weak spots of the Conference, the participants list the absence of success stories on "how to do it," the short Monday morning session, and the meeting rooms outside the hotel.

The postconference questionnaire asked, "What use do you plan to make of the information gained in this Conference?"

Participants' answers indicated plans to share information with their staffs, other professional groups, State and county nutrition committees, persons of other disciplines in related programs, research project directors, and others.

They also listed specific actions they plan.

Specific action anticipated

Followup conference for professional persons in area including 10 Northeastern States.

Followup State meeting.

Promotion of Statewide workshop to encourage and assist local action programs.

Series of district meetings for own personnel.

Reactivation of State nutrition committees so that members can help in community programs, including Head Start and Medicare.

Reexamination of ways of communicating nutrition education, with conscious effort to improve these methods.

Revise, readjust, streamline, reevaluate programs.

"Set up better means of evaluating nutrition work carried on in our area."

"Will find out what is being done on Head Start in our State."

"Will contact Head Start!"

"Help some local programs that I am not yet involved in."

"Explore possibility of nutrition courses for social work majors."

"Contact local agencies to see what resources—people and supplies—are being used at county and State level."

"Propose new research, based on my broadened knowledge of our problems."

"Make greater efforts to coordinate programs in nutrition education in our State, in agencies dealing with community and family programs, and with professionals at community level."

Use of basic concepts

Emphasize basic concepts in own program.

Apply within framework of objectives of agency.

Develop training outlines for school lunch personnel.

Include in in-service training.

Use in teaching others to work with low-income homemakers.

Use in public health in-service nutrition education.

Reevaluate methods and techniques being used in terms of the basic concepts.

"For better organization of teaching materials."

"In designing nutrition laboratory sessions."

"Encourage use of basic concepts by high school, technical school, and adult teachers."

"Include in pilot programs in elementary education throughout the States."

"Examine what now doing—am I teaching from these concepts?"

Work in joint project to assist student teachers in developing lessons using the basic concepts, at secondary and adult levels.

Other uses of information

Publications.

Program planning and development.

Teaching graduate and undergraduate college courses in foods and nutrition.

College course development to prepare for effective nutrition work in various fields.

Extension agent training for low-income families.

Teacher training.

In-service training of staff.

Interagency leaders' planning sessions.

Summer training programs.

Teaching Head Start parents.

Nutrition education program of industry.

International education programs.

Developing new course in nutrition education.

Increasing effectiveness of communications in implementing own State program.

Answering questions about nutrition education programs in contacts with the public.

IN CONCLUSION

The members of the Subcommittee on Evaluation of the Conference agreed that the responses of participants plus the postconference correspondence pointed to the success of the National Nutrition Conference. The subcommittee decided that an 8-month postconference evaluation questionnaire should be sent to participants to learn of followup activities. Questionnaires will be sent out about Oct. 1, with replies requested by Nov. 1. Descriptions of followup activities will appear in a later issue of NPN.

The subcommittee recommended that another conference focus on the State Nutrition Committee's potential as a clearinghouse for sound current nutrition information and a coordinator of nutrition programs. The subcommittee believes that there is as much need now for viable nutrition committees as there was in the postwar period. Many of the participants, in their evaluations, also noted the need for greater coordination of nutrition programs.

WILL YOU HELP?

To prepare an issue of NUTRITION PROGRAM NEWS on State and local nutrition committees—their organization and their potential as a clearinghouse for sound nutrition information and as a coordinator of nutrition programs—we need information about the organization of existing committees.

We would welcome answers to the following questions about your committee from your secretary:

1. What agencies are represented on your committee?
How many representatives does each have?
2. What do you consider the purpose of your committee?

3. Do you have standing committees? If so, name them.
4. What kind of activities does your group engage in as a committee to fulfill your purpose?
5. How many officers do you have? What are their duties?
6. How often does your group meet?
7. What criteria do you use when inviting agencies to be represented on your committee?
8. Do you coordinate the work of member agencies?
Please describe your committee's activities.

For example, have you pooled information about working with low-income families and come to some consensus about how much basic information should be given to this group? Have your member agencies then worked to disseminate the same basic information?

Your descriptions need not be polished accounts; your information will be woven into the finished article. Before we publish descriptions of a nutrition committee's activities, we send that portion of the manuscript to a designated agent for approval.

Please forward your information to:

Dr. Mary M. Hill, Nutritionist
Consumer and Food Economics Research Division
Agricultural Research Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 325, Federal Center Building
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

The Interagency Committee on Nutrition (ICNE) has named Dr. Mary M. Hill, U.S. Department of Agriculture, as chairman for 1967-68. Dr. Hill, of the Consumer and Food Economics Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, succeeds Dr. Evelyn B. Spindler, Division of Home Economics Programs, Federal Extension Service, USDA.

Theresa Demus, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, is new vice chairman. She succeeds Mrs. Marjorie C. Zukel, Bureau of State Services, Public Health Service, HEW.

Mabel A. Walker, Consumer and Food Economics Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, USDA, continues as executive secretary of ICNE.

ICNE agencies and their representatives will be listed in the September-October issue of NUTRITION PROGRAM NEWS. State Nutrition Committee Chairmen will also be given.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
CONSUMER AND FOOD ECONOMICS RESEARCH DIVISION

MATERIALS

Listing of these materials is for the information of the readers and does not necessarily mean recommendation.

Materials or information on them may be obtained from the addresses given. Symbols refer to--

GPO - Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402. Send remittance, money order or check with purchase order.

INF - Office of Information, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250

NF - The Nutrition Foundation, 99 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016.

APPLIED NUTRITION

A Teaching Kit--Food for Thrifty Families. 1967. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Consumer and Marketing Service, Federal Extension Service. Extension workers may request copies through their State Extension offices. \$1.50--GPO

Food Choices: The Teenage Girl. 1966. Mary M. Hill. 11 pages. NF

Your Diet: Health is in the Balance. 1966. Marie M. Alexander, M.S., Department of Nutrition and Frederick J. Stare, M.D., Ph.D. 22 pages. NF

Obesity. 1966. George Christakis, M.D., and Robert K. Plumb. 15 pages NF

Suggested Guidelines for Evaluation of the Nutritional Status of Preschool Children. Welfare Administration of the Children's Bureau, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Children's Bureau, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Third and Independence Avenue, S. W., Washington, D. C. 20201.

The Food We Eat. 1967. Miscellaneous Publication No. 870. Single copy--INF. 15 cents--GPO.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

Family Food Stockpile for Survival. Home and Garden Bulletin 77. 16 pages. Revised 1964. INF

FAMILY ECONOMICS

Handbook of Agricultural Charts. 1966. Economic Research and Foreign Agricultural Research Services cooperating. (Section 6, "The Family" pages 63-69) INF.

How to Buy Eggs by USDA Grade and Weight Classes. Leaflet 442. Single copy--INF

Money Value of Food Used by Households in the United States. Spring, 1965. Agriculture Research Service (preliminary report). INF

FILMS

The Health Fraud Racket. 16 mm, color, sound, 23 minutes, 1967. Cleared for world-wide television. Free short-term loan from: Public Health Service Audiovisual Facility, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. Purchase from: Capital Film Laboratories, 470 E Street, S. W., Washington, D.C. 20024.

FOOD PROCESSING

Chemicals Used in Food Processing. National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council Publication 1274. Available from the National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C. 20418. \$6.50

FOODS

Let's Talk About Food. 1967. The American Medical Association, 535 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois 60610. \$1.20

Your Guides to an Adventure in Eating. District of Columbia Home Economics Association and the Committee on Aging in cooperation with the Consumer Forum of the Institute of Lifetime Learning. Sponsored by National Retired Teachers Association, American Association of Retired Persons. Available from the American Home Economics Association, 1600 Twentieth Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20009

NUTRITION

Nutrition in Relation to Agriculture Production. I. S. Demus. Foreign Agriculture Organization, International Documents Service. Columbia University Press, 2960 Broadway, New York, New York 10027.

SCHOOL LUNCH

Quantity Recipes for Type A School Lunches. Program Aid 631. Consumer and Marketing Service and Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture; Fish and Wildlife, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. Supersedes PA-271, "Recipes, Type A School Lunches." Available free to State school lunch agencies. \$4.00--GPO.